

Preface

This volume contains 33 of the 100 papers presented at the *French–Israeli Conference on Combinatorics and Algorithms* which took place on the beautiful grounds of the Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Jerusalem, Nov. 13–17, 1988. There were over 100 participants from many countries. Not all the conference papers were submitted for this volume. For example, the paper of one of us (ASF, joint with M. Lorberbom) has appeared in JCT-A (1991).

The conference was organized within the framework of scientific and cultural agreements between the French and Israeli Governments. It was sponsored by the National Council for Research and Development of the Israeli Ministry of Science and Development and the Department of Science and Technology of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the Maurice and Gabriela Goldschleger Conference Foundation at the Weizmann Institute of Science, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Tel Aviv University, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Israel Mathematical Union.

The large number of talks which had to be compressed into three-and-a-half days, combined with the shortage of hotel space in Jerusalem at the time of the conference, presented difficult logistic problems. Fortunately, Jerusalem has enjoyed a long tradition of solving combinatorial problems efficiently. For example, when pilgrims from all over Israel and from abroad congregated into Jerusalem some 2,500 years ago, ten miracles occurred according to the Talmud. One of them was that simultaneously with solving the packing problem of compressing all the pilgrims densely into the Temple, powerful expanders were activated to give each and everyone enough elbow room to worship and bow. Another one was that there was sufficient hostel space in the City when the huge crowds overflowed it. These combinatorial miracles, boosted up by the efficient organizational work of the NCRD, provided an appropriate setting and relaxed atmosphere for the conference.

The Organizing Committee consisted of N. Alon, G. Ariely, J.-C. Bermond, J. Bond, S. Cahana, M.M. Deza, A.S. Fraenkel, P. Frankl, M.C. Golumbic, and E. Shamir.

We wish to acknowledge the encouragement of Peter L. Hammer, Editor-in-Chief of *Discrete Mathematics*, and the efficient unfailing help of Nelly Segal, Publications Assistant. Special thanks are due to the referees. The entire organization, from the first call of papers till the last correspondence with authors, referees and editors, through years of hard work, was assisted expertly, skilfully and cheerfully by Mrs. Carol Weintraub. We express our appreciation and thanks to her.

This volume is dedicated to two Israeli combinatorialists who passed away recently: Haim Hanai and Shmuel Schreiber. A tribute to Haim Hanani, on the occasion of his

75th birthday, appeared in a Festschrift: *Discrete Mathematics* 77 (1989), edited by A. Hartman. The same volume contained an obituary of Shmuel Schreiber. Their passing is felt very deeply by their many friends and colleagues in Israel and abroad.

Guest Editors A.S. Fraenkel

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